

University Bookstore at Ohio State University
1885 to 1969

I Early Years

The first bookstore was opened on campus in 1885 by two students -- John F. Fegas and Louis G. Addison -- in a small room on the second floor of University Hall. The student successors in this business were H. C. Laughlin, H. S. Talbot, R. F. Foster, F. R. West, King G. Thompson and B. B. Bigelow.

In 1902 the bookstore, under the management of King G. Thompson and B. B. Bigelow sold to F. C. Long who moved the business to High Street.

Another store opened in Hayes Hall in 1902 by Stanton S. Freeman carrying only a stock of drawing supplies. He later sold to A. G. Geren who also established himself on High Street.

In 1906 a co-operative store was established at 10th and High Streets as one of a chain of college stores selling books and supplies at less than regular retail prices. The next year it was closed due to financial problems.

II The George Siebert Years

In 1902 - 21 a co-op bookstore was opened in Hayes Hall. Efforts were made by private businesses to declare it an illegal intrusion on their businesses, but the court affirmed the right of the students to organize and maintain on the campus such a co-op enterprise. This co-op store was under the management of George H. Siebert and became organized on business principals and was supported by faculty and students. It was successful and in 1926 it became a part of the University Press and included the printing plant and the mailing department.

In September 1925 the Board of Trustees passed the resolution that after July 1, 1926 the Co-op Supply Store would be taken over by the Ohio State University. The name of the new bookstore was to be the University Press Bookstore with George H. Siebert as manager.

In 1926 a court case was brought against the Ohio State University by F. L. Long and other businessmen in the vicinity of O.S.U. The case was that the Ohio State University sold in competition with businessmen in the area. This was dismissed when the court declared that the Trustees are to be commended for assisting the student body in obtaining an education as cheaply as possible. The judge was N. Craige and the decision was made on December 18, 1926.

III Period of Expansion - Laird and DeFosset

On December 1, 1945 Emerson B. Laird, after returning from military leave of absence, was reinstated to the bookstore staff as an assistant manager. George H. Siebert retired in the Spring of 1966 and Emerson B. Laird assumed the position of bookstore manager.

In March of 1963, Richard A. DeFosset, a graduate of the Ohio State University College of Commerce, was employed at the University Bookstore as a supply department manager. When the first on-campus branch store was opened in Neilwood Gables in September 1964, he was promoted to Branch Store Manager. The fixturing, stocking, planning and personnel training for all branches came under his direction at that time. Mr. DeFosset served as Emerson B. Laird's general assistant until Mr. Laird retired in September 1967, when Mr. DeFosset assumed the title of Manager of Bookstores at Ohio State University. Mr. Laird is now actively engaged in operation of the Capital University Bookstore as Store Manager.

The University Bookstore next went into a period of expansion and the main store in Derby Hall doubled its size and remodeled the entrance with new fixtures. In September of 1964, we opened our first branch store operation in Neilwood Gables. This location is now primarily used to service all out-of-town branch store operations.

In September of 1966, we opened our second branch operation on campus in Neil Hall. We called this operation University Bookstore South and it's one of the finest medical stores in the country carrying a very wide selection of reference and handbooks as well as all required textbooks.

In September of 1966 we also opened a temporary branch store located next to the twin towers on the Olentangy River. The purpose of this temporary structure was to serve students with some type of facility until the new River Union is built in 1970 - 71. The River Union will eventually be one of the nicest dormitory stores in operation anywhere.

In September of 1967 we opened our third branch store operation in Columbus in a North Commons dining facility. This was our first venture into a real dormitory store.

Between the period of 1965 and now, we have opened four (4) additional out-of-town branch stores, one each at Lima, Mansfield, Marion and Newark branches of O.S.U. These stores are now serving a combined total of about 5,000 students.

The bookstore is also operating a full-time receiving and warehouse department on Kinnear Road. This facility services all nine (9) of our retail outlets. Further expansion of bookstore facilities is planned at the present and in the future.

In addition to the River Union facility, which will soon be under construction, the University Bookstore will operate outlets in the General College across the Olentangy River on West Campus. This facility will serve incoming freshmen in Columbus. The University Bookstore will also operate a facility in the Center for Tomorrow, now under construction on Olentangy River Road. The purpose of this facility is to serve the vast needs of continuing education in Ohio. As the University grows, and needs of the faculty and students grow, University Bookstore will also grow to meet these needs.